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SUBJECT: SWISS WELCOME UNSC RESOLUTION ON LEBANON

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1.(SBU) Swiss officials generally agree with reftel points regarding UNSC Resolution 1701 and have publicly welcomed the resolution. In response to reftel demarche, Swiss DFA Deputy UN Coordinator Jean-Francois Paroz told Poloff that the worthiness of the resolution would be seen in its implementation. Poloff agreed, stressing that pressure needed to be maintained on Hizballah to disarm and cease terrorist attacks. Poloff regretted the results of the Human Rights Council special session, which could not have been more unbalanced. Paroz said that the Swiss were not satisfied with how the session turned out. He insisted that the decision to abstain should not be viewed as a concession to the Arab League sponsors of the unbalanced resolution. His government, he said, still maintains that the Israeli response was disproportionate -- as Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey controversially put it in the early weeks of the war -- but that it hoped its repeated criticism of Hizballah showed that Bern maintained a balanced position.

Unlikely to Send Peacekeepers

2.(SBU) Regarding participation in the bolstered UNIFIL, Paroz said it was very unlikely Switzerland would take part, due both to a lack of manpower and Switzerland's constitutional difficulty with peace-enforcement (as opposed to peace-keeping) operations. Paroz offered that it was a shame that Switzerland only had the ability to deploy a bit over 200 soldiers at a time (almost all of which are with KFOR in Kosovo), but that would remain the reality until 2008. DATT contacts have described as highly unlikely Swiss UNIFIL participation. That said, the Swiss Joint Staff today sent an officer to Lebanon on a fact-finding mission.

3.(SBU) In public statements, the government has been less unequivocal against deployment, insisting that such a decision would be made once the nature and mandate of the force was decided. Media outlets note that the usual timeline for deployments precluded an early participation, since any mandate would first entail a Swiss interagency assessment, Federal Council (cabinet) approval, Parliamentary committee study, and full Parliamentary approval at one of its four annual sessions.

Press Release

4.(U) A Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs press release on UNSCR 1701 can be found at the following link: www.eda.admin.ch/eda/e/home/singlem.html?id=6566 .
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